Taxes on Luxury Consumption

1149. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has suggested heavy taxes on luxury consumption and strong discouragement of diversion of productive resources to the luxury sector for raising the savings rate during the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regrad?

THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) No, Sir. Exercises relating to estimation of resources for the Eighth Five Year Plan have recently started and no conclusions have yet been reached.

(b) Does not arise.

Harmful Effects of Food Irradiation

1150. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that irradiation of foods leads to formation or organic, free redicals which reacts with molecular oxygen to produce radiolytic products such as epoxides, which after ingestion may react with cellular INA to cause mutaland cancer;

(b) whether in view of the mass of data available abroad, Government propose to review food irradiation policies and programme; and

(c) whether any indepth studies have been undertaken in this country on the subject and if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) There is no evidence to show that ingestion of irradiated food causes mutation or cancer.

(b) While giving clearance for the adoption of irradiation for preservation of food articles, Government have carefully scrutinised all available data on the wholesomeness and safety aspects of irradiated foods.

(c) Indepth studies on radiation doses, wholesomeness and biological safety of irradiation foods, have been carried out. Evidence obtained from studies, using multigeneration trials and tests for mutogenisity, reproductive efficiency and other health parameters, on irradiated and composite diets, have shown the biological safety of irradiated foods.

Food Irradiation

1151. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that food irradiation causes partial or complete destruction or chemical modification of essential vitamins and minerals and if so, whether Government propose to review irradiation of goods both for exports and also for use in the country; and

(b) whether any indepth studies on the subject have been conducted in this country and abroad and if so; full details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) Studies conducted in India and other countries have shown that at doses used for radiation preservation of foods i.e. upto 10 kgs., there are no changes in the mineral content. The alterations in vitamin contents

are minor and are comparable to that in thermal processing or cooking of food.

(b) Extensive studies on these aspects have been carried out in India and abroad and under the WHO/FAO/IAEA sponsored programmes.

Abnormalities due to Food Irradiation

1152. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that food irradiation is known to cause chromosomal abnormalities which have been linked to loukemia;

(b) whether irradiation has also been implicated in testicular tumors; and

(c) whether these dangers from food irradiation are in the knowledge of the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) Ingestion of radiation processed food, does not produce Chromosomal abnormalities as borne out by experiments done in India and several countries abroad.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The Government is fully aware of the safety aspects of the food irradiation process.

Conference of District Magistrates/Collectors

1153. SHRI ALADI ARUNA alias V. ARUNACHALAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the norms fixed by the Central for holding the Conference of District Magistrates or District Collectors under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister;

(b) the number of the conferences so far have been held in the States; and

(c) what are the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Five Workshops of District Magistrates/Collectors were held during December 1987 to June 1988. About 1/5th of District Magistrates/Collectors were nominated by the respective State Governments to participate in each of the Workshops.

(c) Issues that were discussed in these Workshops stemmed from the theme of 'Responsive Administration' (Point 20 of the twenty Point programme) and concerned aspects like district planning within a democratic framework, innovations and institutional changes, public distribution system, effective implementation of anti-poverty programmes, coordination and linkages between official and non-official agencies, delegation of powers, simplification of procedures, accountability, performance evaluation and service conditions. The participants at the Workshops gave suggestions on various issues with a view to making district administration more responsive and emphasized among other things, the need for district level planning within the framework of panchayati raj institutions.

Specific suggestions on the content and methodology of district planning were also made by the participants. The suggestions made at the Workshops are being discussed further in appropriate fora.